

the arguments of the 'bureaucratic collectivists', "the further decay of monopoly capitalism, its further fusion with the state and the replacement of democracy wherever it still remained by a totalitarian regime. The inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead under these conditions to the growth of a new exploiting class from the Bonapartist fascist bureaucracy". (p. 18 has a similar view). Trotsky adopts this simple dichotomy workers state/revolution or decay/a new class society as a means to undermine the arguments of the 'bureaucratic collectivists' (principally Rizzi). But his posing of simple choices as in this case and in the latter view that the war could only mean revolution or the restoration of capitalism act only to obscure any real discussion on the nature of the bureaucracy which for him is purely a transitory, parasitic growth produced by the backwardness of the Russian economy and the failure of the world's working class. At such a level of generalisation the specific nature of the bureaucracy is a small question.

Trotsky's generalisations stand in the way of more precise considerations of the formations and categories he considers. This applies to his central concept that socialism is nationalised property relations. The concept is totally ahistorical, corporate/state forms of property abound throughout history (Roman Armoury manufactories; the properties of the medieval church or the 'colonising' military orders eg. Teutonic Knights in East Prussia, Lithuania, Poland; to the present 'mixed economies' with varying 'nationalised' contents.) What distinguishes the various examples are specific social relations and relations of production proper to each.

Trotsky's emphasis on the legal relations and on the 'transitory' nature of the bureaucratic superstructure of the Soviet Union ignores the totality of its class relations; the lack of self-management of the producers; the system of hierarchy, one man management; the contrast between privilege and piece rate (see Harazti, *A Worker in a Workers State*. Penguin). It is simply to turn historical materialism on its head to seek an explanation at the level of legal relations or in the functioning of the state superstructure alone.

The limits of Trotsky's critique of the USSR are today being demonstrated by their reappearance in the work of modern 'eurocommunists' where they serve to separate the authors from the bureaucracy without fundamentally challenging it as anything more than a deviation or 'degeneration' forced by circumstances. Mandel's criticisms of this school, particularly Ellenstein, in *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism*, can be applied quite closely to Trotsky himself (see espec. Ch.4 *A New Approach to Stalinism*.)

In order to maintain its position as a revolutionary opponent of the soviet bureaucracy Trotskyism has had to create distance between itself and Trotsky. This is nowhere clearer than in the *Theses on Socialist Democracy* (which if anything tends too far towards pluralism) of the

USFI, and in Mandel's substitution of the phrase 'society in transition' for 'workers state' (particularly marked in *From Stalinism* . . .) This evolution is a symptom of Trotsky's weakness on the problems of Party and class and on Stalinism and the class nature of the USSR.

Footnotes.

1. *Third International After Lenin* p.19 "Capitalism structures the entire world economy and it 'operates by its own methods', that is to say by anarchistic methods which constantly undermine its own work, set one country against another, and one branch of industry against another, developing some parts of the world economy while throwing back the development of others."
2. *Revolution Betrayed*. p.5. "In the conditions of capitalist decline, backward countries are unable to attain that level which the old centres of capitalism have attained. Having themselves arrived in a blind alley, the highly civilised nations block the road to those in the process of civilisation. Russia took the road of proletarian revolution not because her economy was the first to become ripe for a socialist change, but because she could not develop further on a capitalist basis."
3. *Revolution Betrayed* p.11. "Socialisation of the means of production had become a necessary condition for bringing the country out of barbarism."
4. *Deutscher Prophet Armed*. p.96. *E.H.Carr Foundations of a Planned Economy Vol.1* p.283.
5. *Standard in marxist-leninist work but also common in Trotskyists* eg. Livio Maitan, *Party, Army and Masses in China*. NLB.
6. *Plekhanov. In Defence of Materialism* (titled for the censors *On the Question of the development of the Monist View of History*) 1892/3; *P.B.Struve, Critical Notes on the Problems of the Economic Development of Russia*. 1894; *Lenin. Development of Capitalism in Russia* (written 1896 published 1899).
7. *Penguin. The Young Lenin*. p.85.
- 7a. *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*. *Pathfinder* 1973. pp.251, 252, 321.
8. *Gaston Leval. Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*; *Sam Dolgoff, The Anarchist Collectives*; *F.Mintz, Autogestion dans l'Espagne Revolutionnaire*.
9. *Carr, The Interregnum* p.23-4, 317.
10. *Carr, FPE vol.1* p.29.
11. *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1937-38*. *Pathfinder*. Letter to Wendelin Thomas.
12. *Arshinov. History of the Makhnovist Movt. Black and Red*. Detroit. 1975. p.265-275, *Makhnovist proclamations*.
13. *Arshinov, see above. Voline. The Unknown Revolution. Black and Red*. Detroit. 1974. *Avrich. Kronstadt 1921, and also The Russian Anarchists*.
14. *Voline. p.473-5*.

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Sketching the limits of
Trotsky



Sketching the limits of Trotsky

This supplement is by no means an attempt to draw a balance sheet of either Trotsky's or 'Trotskyism's' contribution to Marxist theory and to the international workers movement. It is an attempt to provide a basis for such a balance sheet by considering three areas of problems experienced by the socialist movement in the course of the revolutions of this century and placing Trotsky's views and contributions within them to give some indication of the limits of this contribution.

The areas examined are only schematically separated, they are: the role of the peasantry in the transition to socialism; the question of the relationship of socialist politics and organisation to class struggle in pre- and post-revolutionary situations, ie "Party and Class"; and the nature and significance of Stalinism, leading to the question of the class nature of the Soviet Union.

The absence of discussion concerning the theory of 'permanent revolution' stems not from a ready dismissal such as Gramsci's "nothing but a generic forecast presented as a dogma and which demolishes itself by not coming true" (Prison Notebooks p 241), but from the view that the examination of the role of the peasantry undermines shared assumptions of the theory and of its rival - 'national democratic revolution' in its various, Menshevik and Stalinist incarnations (though arguably not Lenin's discarded theory of the

In universal history, the actions of men have results which differ from what they plan and achieve, from their immediate knowledge and intentions. They achieve their aims, but there is produced at the same time something hidden within them, which their consciousness was not aware of and which was not included in their calculations.

(quoted in Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement*, Penguin, 1975)

'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'.

Trotsky's sketch of the combined and uneven development of capitalism in Russia (1) of the impossibilities for a colonial bourgeoisie to create an economy capable of competing in the world market (2), and therefore of the only possible route to economic development (3) are very graphic and persuasive. The usefulness of the theory is considerably affected by his view that the peasantry could only act as the subordinate ally of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. From this position Trotsky argued that only from an advanced technological base could collectivisation be accomplished (4).

The Chinese experience, in the middle 50's, of collectivisation achieving higher productivity without the existence of a technological basis proper to it (whether this is attributed to 'unutilised labour', 'mutual aid' or less prosaically the introduction of further division of labour) and on the basis of a seemingly voluntary mass movement of the

peasantry, has forced theories based upon such assumptions into contortions - the CPC 'substitutes' for a proletariat denied a central role from 1927 to 1967. (5) The alternative is a more scientific task - the re-examination of the role of the peasantry.

It was in the light of the concept of combined and uneven development that Vera Zasulich questioned Marx in 1881 on "the future of (Russian) rural communities, and on the theory that insists that all the people of the world should be forced by historical necessity to go through all the stages of social production." Marx answered, "The historical inevitability of this tendency is expressly restricted to the countries of Western Europe." In 1882, in a new preface to Plekhanov's new translation of the 'Manifesto', Marx and Engels said "We say that Russia today forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe.....and what happens ON and TO the land may serve as the starting point for a communist development". Even a few years later, in a letter to Zasulich, Engels gave a cool reception to Plekhanov's

anti-Populist "Our Differences".

There was, therefore, some support from Marx and Engels for the Populist view that the rural commune might provide the basis for a transition to socialism avoiding capitalism altogether. The founding struggle of the current which was to become Russian Social Democracy was to establish the reality and inevitability of capitalist development in Russia (6). By 1894 Engels had accepted that the pace of capitalist development in Russia made developments based on the rural commune impossible as that institution was rapidly becoming unviable.

However, the limited duration of the possibility Marx and Engels saw is not the main point of interest but rather (a) the implicit assumption that the peasantry could be more than a primitive mass from which petit bourgeois and subsequently bourgeois evolutions would inevitably arise, and (b) that social democracy was founded in opposition to this peasant heresy [rather than on the question of terrorism (see Trotsky. *The Young Lenin* (7))].

The general premise of all social democrats in Russia prior to 1917 was that a bourgeois revolution was necessary and inevitable - the questions debated were whether it was to be led by the bourgeoisie and whether its limits were prescribed by a period of inevitable bourgeois democratic rule. As Trotsky



says 'the mere characterisation of the (Russian) Revolution as bourgeois tells us nothing about the type of its internal development' (The Permanent Revolution. Pathfinder. 1969 p. 59).

Whatever the differences between the social democrats they were united in their estimation of the auxiliary role of the peasantry to more modern classes. This shared assumption also unites the factional positions within Bolshevik social democracy during the 1920s.

That Trotsky's attitude to the peasantry was consistent and largely deprecating is not difficult to establish by a brief survey of his views of a number of revolutionary movements.

'In order to realise the soviet state, there was required the drawing together and mutual penetration of two factors belonging to completely different historical species: a peasant war — that is a movement characteristic of the dawn of bourgeois development — and a proletarian insurrection, the movement signalling its decline.'

On the Chinese peasantry Trotsky notes (The Third International After Lenin, 1936): '(its) role will be neither leading nor independent. The poor peasants of Hupei, Kwantung or Bengal can play a role, not only on a national but on an international scale, but only if they support the workers of Shanghai, Canton, Hankow and Calcutta' (p. 226). Further to this, the Chinese peasantry was 'even less capable of playing a leading role than the Russian' (p. 184).

Discussing the Spanish Revolution Trotsky hardly mentions the peasantry. When he does his programme is limited to that of the first stage of 1917, 'the land to the tillers' (7). As we know the revolution in the countryside had already extended far beyond this (8).

These points are more than a repetition of the factional accusations of 1923 that 'Trotsky underestimates the peasantry' (9) or of 1926 that 'Trotsky proposed to plunder the peasantry' (10). Despite the irregular propagandist appeals to poor peasants (a sure sign of grain crisis throughout the period), all factions in the Bolshevik party leadership were united in viewing the peasantry as incapable of independent mobilisation — they disagreed on the differentiation amongst the peasants, on the strength of the petit-bourgeois tendencies in the countryside and therefore the reality and extent of the 'Kulak mine under the socialist position' (Joint Opposition Platform Summer 1927). It is hardly surprising therefore that in Trotsky's discussions of the period 'peasant' and 'counterrevolutionary' become interchangeable.

The alliance with, and subsequent betrayal and suppression of, the Makhnovist peasant movement in the Ukraine was explained by Trotsky in 1937 (11) as being due to the Makhnovists being 'Kulak cavalry', i.e. they were peasants, they were mounted, therefore they were counterrevolutionary cavalry. There is a fine irony in this, that goes to the heart of the Bolshevik view of the peasantry. In 1920/1, when the Red Army Southern Front commanded by Frunze was to turn overnight against its allies in the previous days struggle against Wrangel (Trotsky also manages to attribute that the Makhnovists aided Wrangel instead of spearheading his downfall) the pro-

clamations 'Forward against Makhnovism' denounced the 'anarchist bandits' for 'attacking the property of soviet citizens', i.e. the 'kulak cavalry' were encouraging land requisition and collectivisation (12). As in Spain during the period of Trotsky's writing on this subject, the opponents of such 'petit-bourgeois' tendencies had to ally themselves with the landowners to secure a social base in the countryside (see Bolloten, Grand Camouflage, et al). For a full discussion of the Makhnovist movement see Avrich, Voline, Arshinov (13).

The suppression of the rebellion of the Baltic garrison at Kronstadt in 1921 is explained by Trotsky, 'they reflected the hostility of the backward peasantry to the worker the hatred of the petit bourgeois for revolutionary discipline' (11). Again the use of 'peasant' is considered the supreme argument as to the counterrevolutionary nature of the revolt. Actually Trotsky missed a lot out in his 1937 'explanation'. He missed the 'white general in command at Kronstadt' — who turned out to be an 'expert' employed under Trotsky's policy and playing no role in the rebellion. He does argue that the sailors who Lenin called 'the flower of the revolution' during 1917 had been dispersed and replaced by 'peasants' by 1921 — although Ida Mett had blown this legend sky high by 1927 when her 'Kronstadt Commune' detailed the histories of those involved and established the continuity Trotsky seeks to abolish.

Of course the peasant movement of the Ukraine was just that, a peasant movement. Yes, there were peasants involved in the Baltic fleet — both as 'the flower of the revolution' and as 'white guard conspirators' and 'backward peasants' (as Mett established, they were the same people in each case). An examination of the Makhnovist proclamations (12) and the demands of the Kronstadt Soviet as printed in the Kronstadt *Izvestia* (14) shows that in relation to the countryside even the most confused and backward of them were in advance of any raised inside the Bolshevik Party. Where the Kronstadters demanded socialist democracy — freedom to the soviets, and tied this to a move away from War Communism designed to encourage the self-mobilisation of the peasantry and its self-differentiation by means of freeing peasant labour from expropriation but denying it the right to employ others (i.e. to strengthen the poor and middle peasants) as in demands 8, 11, 13 of the Kronstadt Soviet resolution (14); the Bolshevik Party at its Tenth Party Congress, meeting at the same time as the rebellion and its crushing, began its move towards the New Economic Policy which meant a free hand for the real petit-bourgeois elements in the countryside, the Kulaks, and which expressly freed them to employ labour and develop agriculture through capitalistic advances. That the Party was to spend the next seven years arguing about the limits of the forces it unleashed by NEP is undeniable. Also irrefutable is that the policy of crushing the peasantry as a whole, inevitable in 1928, was a result of the prior destruction of all the tendencies towards the socialist mobilisation of the peasantry.

The real poverty of the inner party debates

in the 1920s is obvious in the light of latter developments. This is particularly so on the question of the peasantry. Whatever the nature of the 'kulak danger' or its counterpart 'riding to socialism on a peasant nag' both ignored the basic fact of soviet agriculture — as Medvedev (Let History Judge) and Nove (Economic History of the USSR) illustrate, the basic problem was a huge subsistence economy which grew throughout the period. Only between 13% (Stalin) and 21% (Moshkov and Karz) of all grain in 1927 was marketed. This proportion (a source of bitter argument over the importance or otherwise of the kulaks) changed very little over the period whilst the number of peasants' holdings steadily grew from 23 million in 1924 to 25 million in 1927 (Nove p. 106, 110; Medvedev p. 73).

That the Chinese revolution and the subsequent success of collectivisation in China shows the possibility of other estimations of the peasantry and its capacity does not merely mean that hindsight gives us advantages. Such hindsight was not available to the Makhnovists or the Kronstadt revolutionaries. It was not available to earlier generations of Russian revolutionaries either, yet in 'Letters to a Frenchman' (in Maximoff — Political Thought of Michael Bakunin) we find outlined a programme of mobilisation through mutual aid teams, radicalisation through peasant self-government, propaganda by advantageous trade from the towns to the country, and careful strictures against encouraging the individualism of the peasantry and pushing them into the arms of reaction. It is not only in the light of the peasant based national liberation struggles since the Chinese revolution (Vietnam, Angola etc.) that Bolshevik attitudes to the peasantry are found to be profoundly reactionary.

Confused in the suppression of the peasant and peasant-linked revolutionary movements (anarchist and left SR) is not just the mistaken estimation of the potential of these movements but the fear that they represented a threat to the Bolshevik monopoly of power (this is the core of Serge's defence of the Party during this period — see Memoirs). At the centre of this fear was the Bolshevik conception of Party and class.

Lenin had argued the need for a democratic centralist Party because of the uneven development of the masses; the conditions of Tsarist repression; and the origins of revolutionary theory outside the working class, among the intelligentsia. Trotsky had originally sided with the Mensheviks in opposition to Lenin's views as expounded in 'What is to be Done' and fought for at the Second Congress in 1903. His attack 'Our Political Tasks' (1904) argued that the logic of Lenin's conception was that the Party tends to take the place of the class, the Central Committee that of the Party and the leader that of the Central Committee. This view echoed that of Plekhanov (Coll. Wks. Vol. 13 p. 317, cited in Carr: The Bolshevik Revolution Vol. 1, Penguin, p. 45), 'everything will in the last resort revolve around one man who 'ex providentia' will unite all the powers in himself'.

That Trotsky regarded his opposition to Lenin on this as the greatest mistake of his life is evidenced not only by his later admission but also by the fact that during his lifetime he never gave permission for 'Our Political Tasks' to be reprinted. Whatever the subtleties and changed emphases of Lenin's subsequent works, in practice Lenin, and the Bolshevik tradition of his successors, tended to conflate the Party and the proletariat, e.g. On Compromises. 'Our Party, like any political party, is striving after political domination for itself. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat'. Left Wing Communism: The mere presentation of the question 'dictatorship of the Party or dictatorship of the class' testifies to the most incredibly and hopelessly muddled thinking It is common knowledge that as a rule and in most cases. . . . classes are led by political parties'.

In dealing with the movements we have earlier mentioned (Makhno, Kronstadt) the twin conceptions of peasant incapacity for action as a socialist force and the exercise of power by the Bolshevik Party as actually being the dictatorship of the proletariat are dominant. The conflation further from class to Party to Central Committee is clearly outlined in Trotsky's report to the Second Congress of the Comintern. 'Today we have received from the Polish Government proposals for the conclusion of peace. Who decides this question? We have Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars, i.e. the government supposedly drawing its legitimacy from the Soviets) but it must be subject to a certain control. What control? The control of the working class as a formless chaotic mass? No. The central committee of the Party has been called together to discuss the proposal and to decide whether to answer it'. Brinton's short book (The Bolsheviks and



Workers Control 86 pp.) details the reason why the working class had become 'a formless chaotic mass' — all its organs of democratic power had atrophied (soviets) or had actually been obstructed in their attempts at federation and national organisation (factory committee movement).

Lenin was fond of likening anyone breaking Party discipline to 'strikebreaking'. Trotsky's position throughout his fight against Stalin and Bukharin (earlier allied with Zinoviev and Kamenev) was crippled tactically by this assumption. He not only accepted the suppression of Lenin's 'Testament' by the 13th Congress but was forced to denounce as a lie Eastman's publication of the document — a move on his behalf (see Carr: The Interregnum, pp. 266-7, 271; Socialism in One Country, Vol. 2, pp. 74-76; Foundations of a Planned Economy, Vol. 2, p. 17). He maintained this attitude throughout the debates of the 20s. 'The Real Situation in Russia' 1928, p. 129. 'It goes without saying that, after the adoption of a decision, it is carried out with iron Bolshevik discipline'. Many of the favoured quotations of Trotskyist journals used for the inflation of their own organisations date from the period before exile ('Red Flag' is a mine of such gems). 'Without the Party we are nothing, with the Party we are everything'. 'It is impossible to be right against the Party' (Shades of Serge's 'Case of Comrade Tulayev' and Koestler's 'Darkness at Noon!').

Photographs cour



Trotsky's central concern throughout the period of his opposition inside the Party was the danger from the Right, from Bukharin and the forces which represented the 'kulak danger'. This led to his serious underestimation of the danger of Stalin and his late criticisms of the regime inside the Party. Trotsky began his attack on 'bureaucratism' (in dubious alliance with Zinoviev and Kamenev) at the same point that previous oppositions (Workers Truth, Workers Opposition, Democratic Centralists), whose suppression he had supported at the Tenth Congress, had started five years earlier (when Trotsky was second only to Lenin). For the Democratic Centralists, Victor Smirnov concluded at this time *'The Party is a stinking corpse'*.

Only after six years of exile, and shortly before he concluded that the entire Comintern was lost to the cause of socialism, did he turn to questions of socialist democracy — Bulletin of the Opposition, Oct. 1933, cited in Carr: F. P. E. Vol. 2, p. 469. *'What Marx and Lenin meant by a proletarian revolution, and what the Russian Revolution failed to achieve, was a process of human emancipation which would abolish exploitation, not a revolution which would expose the masses to new forms of inequality and new forms of bureaucratic organisation and oppression.'* Whether Lenin's views were such is difficult to determine. Among the measures he proposed (Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government, April 1918) were the introduction of piece work, 'Taylor' systems of

work study and organisation, a card system for registering each worker's productivity, productivity bonuses and strict discipline, *'Unquestioning submission to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of labour processes that are based on large-scale machine industry. . . . today the Revolution demands, in the interests of socialism, that the masses unquestioningly obey the single will of the leaders of the labour process.'*

Throughout Lenin's and Trotsky's works the proletariat appears as the object in the struggle between Marxists and bourgeois ideologists (this is no better summarised than in 'The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International', the Transitional Programme, *'the crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership'*). Since this conception means that the class cannot be a revolutionary class without such leadership it follows that it is necessary for the Party to establish its control and to maintain it. The substitution is then complete. Other organs of class organisation, from unions to soviets, are useful only to allow the Party to 'base itself', 'establish links' or 'place (the working class) under the leadership of the Party'. In all this the relation is subject to object.

Claudin is a better source than Trotsky on the extent to which these views were transmitted to the Comintern and to its international oppositions of expelled dissidents (see his Epilogue to The Communist Movement).

Even the orthodox Trotskyist explanation of the victory of Stalinism assumes the substitution of Party for class. Given the 'mystic link' between the two we have the mechanism whereby the 'isolation of the revolution' and the 'backwardness of Russia' permeate from the object to the subject and lo! Degeneration of the Party/State/Revolution/Class. A less mystical explanation might begin by citing precisely the objective separation assumed by the subjective identification — this is the method sketched out by Arshinov, Brinton et al. Then the effects of the developments and isolation are seen to be acting on a concrete structure rather than a rambling and mystical unity.

In looking at 'backwardness' as the main source of degeneration (e.g. Lenin's strictures on the 'lack of culture' at the Eleventh Congress) or the 'degeneration' of the working class, the real historical developments that broke the links between the revolution and the bureaucracy which followed it are ignored. Trotsky himself (History of the Russian Revolution) gives instances of the sudden ceasing of elections to soviets after October (p. 199). Brinton details the deliberate prevention of factory committee congresses. The result, the apologists tell us, *'the working class itself no longer existed as an agency collectively organised so as to be able to determine its own interests'* (Harman, How the Revolution was Lost, p. 7). We have briefly discussed how examples of such 'determination of interests' were dealt with in our consideration of Kronstadt and the Ukraine. In his works on Germany and on Spain Trotsky repeatedly takes to task the Social Democrats, Stalinists and Anarchists for their failures which they excuse by 'blaming the working class' for their own false policies, the 'explanations' for the loss/failure/degeneration of the Russian Revolution are but giant examples of this method. In each case they are an attempt to avoid an estimation of the politics involved.

The most telling point against the thesis of slow degeneration through isolation of the revolution and backwardness of the country is that all the measures which prevented the 'determination of interests' were early features of the revolution as Brinton's chronology demonstrates. The Makhnovist and Kronstadt movements were aimed precisely at the blocks to such 'determinations'. From this view 1921, which also saw Trotsky at the height of his power, saw the end of the revolution as a 'process of human emancipation'. The masses were already exposed to 'new forms of inequality and new forms of bureaucratic organisation and oppression'.

In 1904 Trotsky argued against substitution with the words *'The tasks of the new regime will be so complex that they cannot be solved otherwise than by way of competition between various methods of economic and political construction, by way of long "disputes", by way of a systematic struggle not only between the socialist and capitalist worlds, but also many trends inside socialism, trends which will inevitably emerge as soon as the proletarian dictatorship poses tens and hundreds of new . . . problems. No strong "domineering" organisation . . . will be able to suppress these trends and controversies . . . A proletariat capable of exercising its dictatorship over society will not tolerate any dictatorship over itself. . . . The working class . . . will undoubtedly have in its ranks quite a few political in-*

valids . . . and much ballast of obsolescent ideas which it will have to jettison. In the epoch of dictatorship, as now, it will have to cleanse its mind of false theories and bourgeois experience and to purge its ranks from political phrasemongers and backward-looking revolutionaries . . . But this intricate task cannot be solved by placing above the proletariat a few well-picked people. . . . or one person invested with the power to liquidate and degrade' (Quoted in Deutscher, The Prophet Armed, pp. 92-3).

Once begun the substitution of Party for class and apparatus for Party undoubtedly found favourable conditions in the Russia of the 1920s. Each step in the development of the bureaucracy was premised on the elimination of opposition outside the Party but before this was completed 'liquidation and degradation' from on high were introduced into the Party itself.

At the Ninth Congress (April 1920) Yurenev protested at the methods used by the Central Committee to suppress criticism from the Democratic Centralists and Workers Opposition, *'one goes to Christiana, another sent to the Urals, a third — to Siberia'*. Maximovsky attacked the 'bureaucratic centralism' of the apparatus: *'It is said that a fish begins to rot from the head. The party begins to suffer at the top from the influence of bureaucratic centralism'*. Sapronov argued, *'However much you talk about electoral rights, about the dictatorship of the proletariat, about the yearning of the Central Committee for the party dictatorship, in fact this leads to the dictatorship of the party bureaucracy.'*

At the Tenth Congress, in the shadow of Kronstadt, Trotsky attacked the Workers Opposition. *'They have come out with dangerous slogans. They have made a fetish of democratic principles. They have placed the workers' right to elect representatives above the Party. As if the Party were not entitled to assert its dictatorship even if that dictatorship temporarily clashed with the passing moods of the workers' democracy! Trotsky spoke of "the revolutionary historical birthright of the Party". The Party is obliged to maintain its dictatorship . . . regardless of the passing moods of the workers' democracy, regardless of the temporary vacillations even in the working class The dictatorship does not base itself at every given moment on the formal principle of a workers' democracy'*.

Lenin attacked the Workers Opposition (which represented the proletarian base of the Party) as 'petit-bourgeois', 'syndicalist' and 'anarchist'. The demands of the opposition were very similar to those of the Kronstadt rebellion (Q.E.D.?). The danger was that instead of centring on small areas — 'lack of culture', 'bureaucratism in x department', they questioned the class nature of the State. Criticism at this level raised the same danger to the monopoly of power as the rebels in Kronstadt. Bogdanov of the Workers Truth group argued that the revolution had ended *'in a complete defeat for the working class. . . . the bureaucracy, along with the NEPmen had become a new bourgeoisie, depending on the exploitation of the workers and taking advantage of their disorganisation. . . . With the Trade Unions in the hands of the bureaucracy the workers were more helpless than ever The Communist Party . . . after becoming the ruling Party, the Party of the organisers and leaders of the state apparatus and of the capitalist based economic life . . . had irrevocably lost its tie and community with the proletariat'*. Lenin's argument went to the heart of the matter, *'Marxism teaches us that only the political party of the working class, i.e. the Communist Party, is in a position to unite, educate, organise. . . . and direct all sides of the proletarian movement and hence all the working masses. Without this the dictatorship of the proletariat is meaningless.'*

The Tenth Party Congress agreed to further draconian restrictions on the membership of the Party. Factional rights were abolished and a secret provision gave the Central Committee unlimited disciplinary powers including expulsion from the Party and even from the Central Committee itself (for which a two thirds majority was required). In the aftermath of such events the proposals for NEP took very little time! Only 20 of the 330 pages of the Report deal with it!

The finishing touches had been made on the mechanism of bureaucratic rule and Lenin and Trotsky had provided its ideological justification.

There is a certain irony in Trotsky's statement, written in 1939, that *'Stalinism had first to exterminate politically and then physically the leading cadres of Bolshevism in order to become that which it is now: an apparatus of the privileged, a brake upon historical progress, an agency of world imperialism'*.

In the same vein Trotsky stated (Revolution Betrayed p. 279) *'From the first days of*

the Soviet regime the counterweight to bureaucratism was the Party. If the bureaucracy managed the state, still the Party controlled the bureaucracy. Keenly vigilant lest inequality transcend the limit of what was necessary, the Party was always in a state of open or disguised struggle with the bureaucracy. The historic role of Stalin's faction was to destroy this duplication, subjecting the Party to its own officialdom and merging the latter in the officialdom of the state (which body considered the Polish government's proposals for peace?). Thus was created the present totalitarian state.' Exactly.

For the first ten years of its existence Trotsky's opposition was a 'reform' group explicitly rejecting the idea of the need for a new revolution in the USSR and the related idea of a new revolutionary international. Trotsky's view was that the danger during the 20s was chiefly from the Bukharin-Rykov group whose encouragement of rural petit bourgeois production and limiting the pace of industrialisation to this rural development threatened the resurrection of capitalism through the growth of the kulaks (rich peasants) and the various private trading structures that grew up from their production. The Stalinist faction, based on the Party and state bureaucracies, was seen as a vacillating, inconsistent centrist group. The main attacks against this centre were that they opened the road for the right. Under the pressure from the left and right Trotsky expected this centre to break up (see the first section of 'The Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism'). As late as 1931 Trotsky argued (Problems of the Development of the USSR) *'The recognition of the present Soviet State as a workers' state not only signifies that the bourgeoisie can conquer power in no other way than by armed uprising but also that the proletariat of the USSR has not forfeited the possibility of submitting the bureaucracy to it (a curious phrasing, reminiscent of "blaming the working class"), or reviving the Party again and of mending the regime of the dictatorship — without a new revolution, with the methods and on the road of reform.'*

Clarifying his definition of socialism further, and establishing a view he was to hold to, Trotsky explained in 'The Revolution Betrayed': *'The nationalisation of the land, the means of industrial production, transport and exchange, together with the monopoly of foreign trade, constitutes the basis of the Soviet social structure. Through these relations, established by the proletarian revolution, the nature of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state is for us basically defined'* (p. 235). The centre of the Trotskyist view of the USSR as a workers' state is exactly the nationalised property. All other questions of analysis are secondary to this if not subsumed into it in the course of argument. If one actually considers the necessary course of any proletarian rising the question becomes much clearer. What will be necessary with regard to the apparatus of management, to the police, KGB, and military establishment in the event of revolution? It will have to be smashed. Will it be possible for a proletarian revolution to make use of the same methods of decision making as to the needs and priorities of production or will new and democratic organs have to be created? They undoubtedly will. What does this mean? A proletarian revolution in the USSR will have to smash the state apparatus and establish new means of ruling. On the other hand can the apparatus of the soviet state be used by any group controlling it to exploit the labour of the working people? Is the apparatus well constructed to that end? It can. It is. Trotsky moved towards extending his definition of the 'political revolution', which he saw as necessary once he had left the path of reforming the state apparatus in 1934, to precisely such a smashing of the existing state, *'The goal to be attained by the overthrow of the bureaucracy is the re-establishment of the rule of the soviets'*. There is no longer any idea that the central task is to 'revive the Party' but there is a confusion in that Trotsky's next phrase is *'expelling from them the present bureaucracy'* (In Defence of Marxism p. 4). The effect of this sleight of hand is to suggest that soviets still rule but are controlled by the bureaucracy, we are led away again from facing up to the fact that the bureaucracy ruled through a specific state apparatus not through the purely ornamental soviets, and through this Trotsky manages to avoid the simple truth that the overthrow of the bureaucracy by the proletariat means smashing the existing state apparatus.

Although Trotsky's often-quoted prediction as to the likely outcome of the Second World War open the way for going beyond the 'workers stage' idea he never himself faced up to the fact that it meant reviving the marxist theory of the state as a tool to analyse the bureaucracy. In 'The USSR in War' (In Defence of Marxism p.10) he accepts that the failure of the proletarian revolution will prove